

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

**Output. 2.4**

**Question No. 97**

**Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing 27 May 2008:**

Emergency Services Volunteers:

- a) How many Emergency Service Volunteers do we have in Australia today?
- b) Please provide a breakdown by state and territory.
- c) Please provide a breakdown as to what service they provide.
- d) What is the proportion of volunteers and employed emergency service personnel for fire services?
- e) What is the proportion of volunteers and employed emergency service personnel for ambulance services?
- f) What is the proportion of volunteers and employed emergency service personnel for State Emergency Services?

Please provide a breakdown by state and territory of questions d) to f).

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

- a) In 2006-07, over 254,000 fire, ambulance and State and Territory emergency services volunteers played a significant role in the provision of emergency services in Australia. (Ref: Table 9.1, SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2008, *Report on Government Services 2008*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.)

- b) The following in a breakdown of numbers of emergency services volunteers by state and territory in 2006-2007. This information has been sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2008* by the Productivity Commission, Canberra.

| State / Territory                 | Number of Emergency Services Volunteers in 2006-2007 <sup>(a)</sup> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New South Wales <sup>(b)</sup>    | 86,754                                                              |
| Victoria <sup>(c)</sup>           | 64,817                                                              |
| Queensland <sup>(d)</sup>         | 43,416                                                              |
| Western Australia <sup>(e)</sup>  | 31,998                                                              |
| South Australia <sup>(f)</sup>    | 18,957                                                              |
| Tasmania                          | 6,010                                                               |
| Australian Capital Territory      | 1,452                                                               |
| Northern Territory <sup>(g)</sup> | 907                                                                 |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>254,311</b>                                                      |

**a** Numbers for fire service organisations include volunteer support staff plus part paid volunteers for all jurisdictions except WA and the ACT.

**b** NSW: For SES, active volunteers are termed 'active members' and non-active volunteers are termed 'reserve members'.

**c** Vic: Data on volunteers includes some remunerated volunteers. These volunteers were remunerated for some time (usually response), but not for other time (usually on-call time).

**d** Qld: For S/TES, the decrease in numbers is the result of an audit of volunteer records that identified and removed records of volunteers who have left the SES.

**e** WA: S/TES data does not include 494 Volunteer Emergency Service members (included as FSO members).

**f** SA SES data refer to active, operational members.

**g** NT Transient persons in the NT see fluctuations in the numbers of volunteers.

c) The following is a breakdown as to what services the volunteers provided in each jurisdiction for 2006-2007. This information has been sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2008* by the Productivity Commission, Canberra.

### Volunteers in emergency service organisations (a)

|                                     | NSW <sup>b</sup> | Vic <sup>c</sup> | Qld <sup>d</sup> | WA <sup>e</sup> | SA <sup>f</sup> | Tas          | ACT          | NT <sup>g</sup> | Aust           |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Ambulance Service Organisations     | 121              | 897              | 416              | 2 839           | 1 619           | 507          | –            | 10              | 6 409          |
| Fire Service Organisations          | 76 302           | 59 509           | 36 000           | 27 305          | 15 517          | 4 978        | 1 261        | 550             | 221 422        |
| State /Territory Emergency Services | 10 331           | 4 411            | 7 000            | 1 854           | 1 821           | 525          | 191          | 347             | 26 480         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>86 754</b>    | <b>64 817</b>    | <b>43 416</b>    | <b>31 998</b>   | <b>18 957</b>   | <b>6 010</b> | <b>1 452</b> | <b>907</b>      | <b>254 311</b> |

ASO = ambulance service organisation. FSO = fire services organisation.

<sup>a</sup> Numbers for fire service organisations include volunteer support staff plus part paid volunteers for all jurisdictions except WA and the ACT.

<sup>b</sup> NSW: For SES, active volunteers are termed 'active members' and non-active volunteers are termed 'reserve members'.

<sup>c</sup> Vic: Data on volunteers includes some remunerated volunteers. These volunteers were remunerated for some time (usually response), but not for other time (usually on-call time).

<sup>d</sup> Qld: For S/TES, the decrease in numbers is the result of an audit of volunteer records that identified and removed records of volunteers who have left the SES.

<sup>e</sup> WA: S/TES data does not include 494 Volunteer Emergency Service members (included as FSO members).

<sup>f</sup> SA SES data refer to active, operational members.

<sup>g</sup> NT Transient persons in the NT see fluctuations in the numbers of volunteers. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: tables 9A.5, 9A.20 and 9A.30 *Report on Government Services 2008*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

- (i) d) The proportion of volunteers and employed emergency service personnel for fire services for each jurisdiction in 2006-2007 is detailed in the table below. This information has been sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2008* by the Productivity Commission, Canberra.

|                                        | Unit<br>(a) | NSW (b) | Vic (c) | Qld (d) | WA (e) | SA (f) | Tas   | ACT<br>(g) | NT (h) | Aust    |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|-------|------------|--------|---------|
| Total employed fire services personnel | FTE         | 4 883   | 6 127   | 2 971   | 1 210  | 945    | 457   | 372        | 223    | 17 188  |
| % of employed fire services personnel* |             | 6%      | 9%      | 8%      | 4%     | 6%     | 8%    | 23%        | 29%    | 7%      |
| Volunteer firefighters (i)             | no.         | 76 302  | 59 509  | 36 000  | 27 305 | 15 517 | 4 978 | 1 261      | 550    | 221 422 |
| % of fire service volunteers*          |             | 94%     | 91%     | 92%     | 96%    | 94%    | 92%   | 77%        | 71%    | 93%     |

- a) FTE = full time equivalent. (Total head count of personnel may differ)
- b) NSW: Numbers for fire service organisations include retained (part-time) firefighters and community fire unit members.
- c) Vic: Victoria's land management agency, the Department of Sustainability and Environment is included from 2005-06. Availability figures for the Country Fire Authority are not included due to data collection issues.
- d) Qld: Firefighting personnel include senior fire officers, Assistant and Deputy Commissioners and the Commissioner. Volunteer firefighter data for Queensland include volunteer rural firefighters and support personnel as a mix.
- e) WA: Re firefighting personnel, FESA provides a wide range of emergency services under an integrated management structure. It has become increasingly complex to segregate data for individual emergency activities. From 2006-07, data reflects all emergency services including SES and volunteer marine rescue services. FESA's support personnel are not segregated by service so that data for 2006-07 includes all non-fire specific support staff. With respect to volunteer firefighters, data for 2006-07 includes volunteers from local government bush fire brigades, volunteer fire and rescue brigades, volunteer fire services and multi-skilled volunteer emergency services.
- f) SA: The SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission employs most support personnel. Fire agency support staff include Metropolitan Fire Service training, building inspection and fire cause investigatory staff.
- g) ACT: Increase in both CFU and RFS volunteers.
- h) NT: Numbers reflect NTFRS and BFNT uniformed, non-uniformed and volunteers.
- i) Numbers include volunteer fire support staff.

\* These percentages should be used as an indication only and may not be accurate as the unit used to measure the number of employed fire service personnel is Full Time Equivalents versus absolute numbers used to measure volunteers.

- e) The proportion of volunteers and employed emergency service personnel for ambulance services for each jurisdiction in 2006-2007 is shown in the table below. This information has been sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2008* by the Productivity Commission, Canberra.

|                                                | <i>Unit</i> | <i>NSW</i> | <i>Vic (a)</i> | <i>Qld (b)</i> | <i>WA (c)</i> | <i>SA (d)</i> | <i>Tas (e)</i> | <i>ACT<br/>(f)</i> | <i>NT</i> | <i>Aust</i> |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Total salaried ambulance service personnel (i) | FTE         | 3 701      | 2 589          | 3 197          | 737           | 980           | 263            | 133                | 134       | 11 733      |
| % of salaried ambulance service personnel *    |             | 97%        | 74%            | 88%            | 21%           | 38%           | 34%            | 100%               | 93%       | 65%         |
| Total ambulance service volunteers             | no.         | 121        | 897            | 416            | 2 839         | 1 619         | 507            | –                  | 10        | 6 409       |
| Percentage of volunteers *                     |             | 3%         | 26%            | 12%            | 79%           | 62%           | 66%            | 0                  | 7%        | 35%         |

j) FTE = full time equivalent. (Total head count of personnel may differ)

(a) Vic: Data on volunteers includes some remunerated volunteers. These volunteers were remunerated for some time (usually response), but not for other time (usually on-call time).

(b) Qld: Operational support personnel include station officers.

(c) WA: The comparatively high number of volunteers in the operational and corporate support category arises from including staff involved in the provision of the public First Aid services division. This division accounts for 45.7 FTE of corporate personnel.

(d) SA volunteers data are approximated.

(e) Tas: The number of non remunerated volunteer ambulance operatives was 448 in 2004-05, down from 567 in the preceding year due to (a) the exclusion of district health hospital staff trained to volunteer level, and (b) inactive volunteers. In Tasmania, clinical other relates to part time doctors.

(f) ACT: Includes attribution of Emergency Service Agency Staff; on 1 July 2006 the ESA was re-absorbed into the Department of Justice & Community Safety and the ACT Government centralised Finance and HR staff in a Shared Service Centre.

– Nil or rounded to zero.

\* These percentages should be used as an indication only and may not be accurate as the unit used to measure the number of employed fire service personnel is Full Time Equivalents versus absolute numbers used to measure volunteers.

f) The proportion of volunteers and employed emergency service personnel for State Emergency Services for each jurisdiction in 2006-2007 is shown in the table below. This information has been sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2008* by the Productivity Commission, Canberra and direct input from jurisdictions emergency services organisations.

|                           | NSW (a) | Vic   | Qld (b) | WA (c) | SA (d) | Tas | ACT | NT (e) | Aust   |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|---------|--------|--------|-----|-----|--------|--------|
| Total employed staff      | 177     | 87    | 278     | N/A    | 38     | 24  | 8   | 16     | 628    |
| % of SES employed staff * | 2%      | 2%    | 4%      | N/A    | 2%     | 4%  | 4%  | 4%     | 2%     |
| Total SES Volunteers      | 10 331  | 4 411 | 7 000   | 1 854  | 1 821  | 525 | 191 | 347    | 26 480 |
| % of SES volunteers *     | 98%     | 98%   | 96%     | N/A    | 98%    | 96% | 96% | 96%    | 98%    |

(i) FTE = full time equivalent. (Total head count of personnel may differ)

N/A Not available at the time of compilation of this response

a) NSW: Active volunteers are termed 'active members' and non-active volunteers are termed 'reserve members'.

b) Qld: The decrease in numbers is the result of an audit of volunteer records that identified and removed records of volunteers who have left the SES.

c) WA: Does not include 494 Volunteer Emergency Service members (included as FSO members).

d) SA: SES data refer to active, operational members.

e) NT: Transient persons in the NT see fluctuations in the numbers of volunteers.

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